

Kindergarten Rules Inquiry

Are All Rules Good Rules?



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Supporting Questions

1. Who makes the rules?
2. What does it mean to follow the rules?
3. Can the rules ever change?



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Are All Rules Good Rules?

New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea & Practices	K.5: Rules affect children and adults, and people make and change rules for many reasons. ✓ Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence ✓ Civic Participation
Staging the Question	Share the compelling question with the class and have students brainstorm initial responses. Teachers should chart the responses in order to compare them with students' ideas at the end of the inquiry.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
Who makes the rules?	What does it mean to follow the rules?	Can the rules ever change?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Create and label a wheel-spoke chart identifying the roles of rule makers and authority figures.	Illustrate and label a two-sided picture showing a rule being followed on one side and a rule not being followed on the opposite side.	Complete a three-column chart showing the situation <i>before</i> a related law was changed, <i>after</i> the law was changed, and <i>why</i> the law was changed.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: Image bank: Rule makers Source B: Image bank: Rules created by children Source C: <i>Branches of Government</i> video	Source A: Image bank: Signs indicating rules	Source A: "Voting and the Law" article Source B: "Minimum Wage Update"

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT Are all rules good rules? Construct an argument supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question.
	EXTENSION Create a digital recording of the oral argument.
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND Review the class and school rules. ASSESS Determine whether the classroom or school needs additional or revised rules. ACT Create and/or revise rules for the classroom or school and educate others about how to follow the new rules.



Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry engages kindergartners in exploring the various ways people interact with and act upon rules and laws in society. The compelling question “Are all rules good rules?” assumes that while students generally enter school with some concept of rules and what it means to follow or break them, they may not yet understand who makes rules and how they change.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (K.5a) Children and adults must follow rules within the home, school, and community to provide for a safe and orderly environment.
- (K.5b) People in authority make rules and laws that provide for the health and safety of all.
- (K.5c) Children and adults have opportunities to contribute to the development of rules and/or laws.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take three to five 30-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame might expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries to meet the requirements and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Are all rules good rules?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence from a variety of sources.

Staging the Compelling Question

This inquiry opens with the compelling question “Are all rules good rules?” This question opens up the idea of making, following, and changing rules that govern our behavior. To stage the question, teachers might begin with a brainstorming session where students offer their initial responses to the compelling question. Charting these responses and then encouraging students to review them at the end of the inquiry is a nice way to help students see where their thinking has changed and where it has stayed the same.



Supporting Question 1

Supporting Question 1—“Who makes the rules?”—initiates a discussion about rule makers and authority figures. A key point to make here is the distinction between rules and laws: A rule is a direction that we have to follow to keep us healthy, safe, and orderly; the rules in our community are often called laws. Students should examine the featured sources to understand that rules are created by various individuals and groups and in different contexts (nationally, locally, and within small-group settings). Two of the featured sources are image banks related to rule making. Featured Source A consists of images of adults as rule makers (e.g., school principal and coach). Featured Source B is a series of pictures that show rules children have made. Featured Source C is a video describing the three branches of the United States government. The formative performance task asks students, in small groups or as a whole class, to create and label a wheel-spoke chart that lists “rule makers” in the center bubble and the names and titles of individuals and groups who create rules on lines drawn out from the bubble.

Supporting Question 2

Supporting Question 2—“What does it mean to follow the rules?”—uses the images in the featured source to show how signage helps citizens follow rules related to traffic and community safety. After participating in a Gallery Walk exercise related to the images, students should complete the formative performance task, in which they illustrate and label a two-sided picture that shows an example of a behavior that represents following a rule on one side and an example of what not following that rule would look like on the other.

Supporting Question 3

Supporting Question 3—“Can the rules ever change?”—touches on a new concept for some kindergartners who may come to school thinking rules and laws are fixed. Featured Source A offers students a historical perspective on how voting laws have changed over time by focusing on the increase in the number of Americans who are eligible to vote. Featured Source B provides a more contemporary example of a law changing by showing how minimum-wage rates have changed and are increasing in New York State. To complete the formative performance task, students should show, through a combination of words and illustrations, how a law has changed and explain why it has changed. This task can be completed on a three-column chart showing the situation *before* the law was changed, *after* the law was changed, and *why* the law was changed.

Summative Performance Task

Students should draw upon their understandings developed through the formative performance tasks to craft an evidence-based argument responding to the question “Are all rules good rules?” Students can present their



arguments orally to the teacher. To prepare for crafting an argument, students may gather their sources and in-class work and work in small groups to discuss the possible responses.

Student arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- Rules are good when they help keep people safe, but not all rules do that.
- Rules are not always good, but bad rules can be changed.
- Rules should help people, but not all rules do.
- People should follow rules, but they can also make new rules or change the rules if they decide that they need to.

An extension to this inquiry could involve students creating digital audio recordings of their responses to the question. Recordings can be posted on a classroom web page or saved for future reference.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their knowledge of the purposes of rules and how rules are established and revised. Students demonstrate that they *understand* by reviewing the class and school rules. They show their ability to *assess* by determining if any classroom or school rules need to be revised, added, or removed. And they *act* by creating and/or revising classroom or school rules and educating others about how to follow them.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source A: Image bank: Rule makers



Image 1: School principal.

© iStock/© Steve Debenport.



Image 2: Basketball coach.

© iStock/© Susan Chiang.



Image 3: Lifeguard.
© iStock/© gchutka.



Image 4: Teacher.
© iStock/© iofoto.



Image 5: Parents with their child.
© iStock/© Lorraine Boogich.



Image 6: Police officer.
© iStock/© aijohn784.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source B: Image bank: Rules created by children

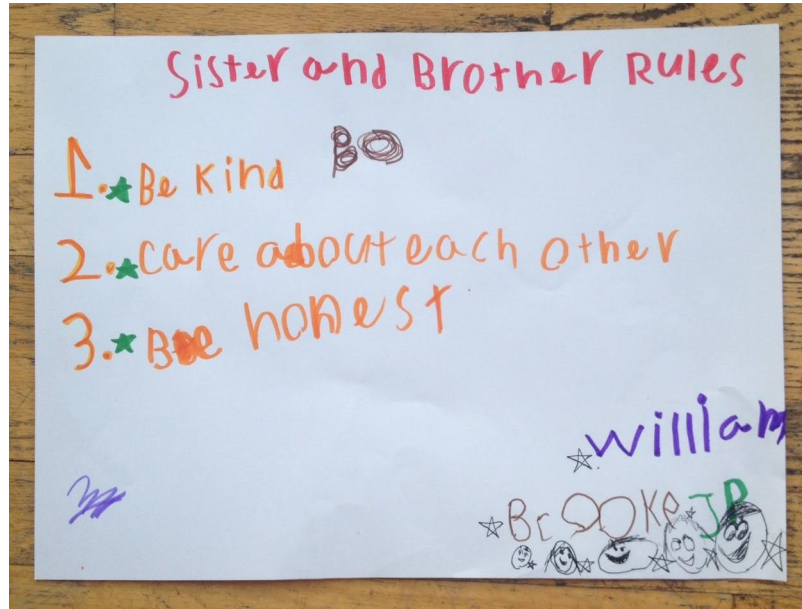


Image 1: Rules for a brother and sister.

Photo courtesy of Kate Hesla.

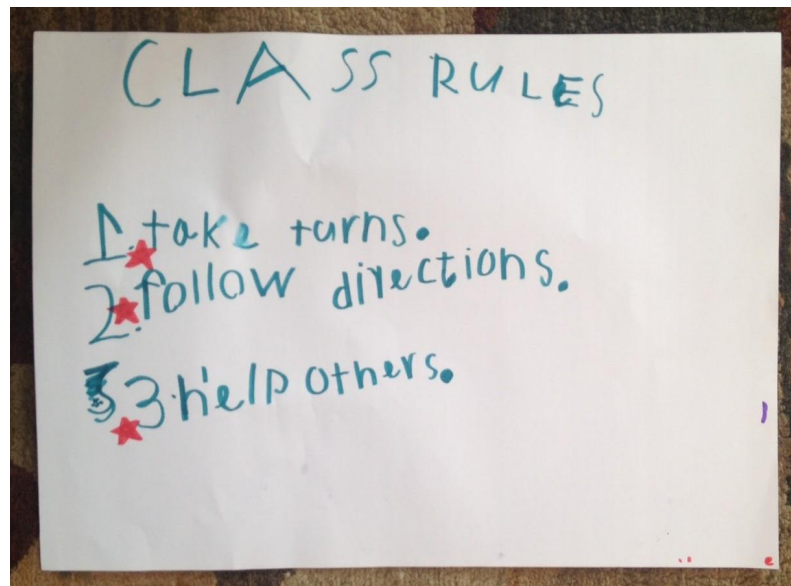


Image 2: Rules for a school classroom.

Photo courtesy of Kate Hesla.



Image 3: Rules for playing with toys.
Photo courtesy of Kate Hesla.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source C: Brain POP Jr., video on the branches of the US government, *Branches of Government with Annie & Moby*, 2015

Note: This is a screenshot of the video explaining the branches of the US Government that can be viewed on the BrainPOP Jr. website at <https://jr.brainpop.com/socialstudies/government/branchesofgovernment>.

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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source A: Image bank: Signs indicating rules



Image 1: Sign warning about the need to use seat belts.

© Shutterstock/© Robert J. Beyers II.



Image 2: Sign indicating in which direction it is legal to drive.

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Image 3: Sign indicating that diving is not allowed.
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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source A: Susan LaBella, article about the history of the right to vote, "Voting and the Law," 2015

NOTE: This source points to the idea that rules, such as voting laws, can be changed to protect people's rights. But teachers should also help their students see the connection between electing representatives for positions in government and the ability to change laws.

Voting and the Law

By Susan LaBella

When people vote, they make a choice. For example, people voting for U.S. Congress pick the men and women who pass laws that govern the country.



People who run for office are called *candidates*. During the weeks before an election is held, candidates describe what they plan to do if they are elected. The candidates make speeches about their ideas. They have discussions with other candidates. They may promise to work to change laws they do not like or to pass new ones.

Voters listen to these promises. Then they decide which candidates they think are the best. On Election Day, voters go to a public building, such as a school or a firehouse. They vote by filling out a paper form or, in some places, by using a computer.

Long ago, only a small number of people in the United States could vote. Some men were allowed to vote, but women, black people, poor people, and young people could not. Over the years, laws were changed. Now many more people can vote. All voters must be U.S. citizens and at least eighteen years old.



They all must have registered, or signed up, to vote.

At the end of every Election Day, votes are counted. The winning candidates are announced. Soon, the winners will get their chance to do the things they promised to do.

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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source B: New York Labor Department, description of changes in New York State's minimum wage law, "Minimum Wage Update," 2013

Beginning December 31, 2013, New York State's minimum wage will increase in a series of three annual changes as follows:

\$8.00 on 12/31/13

\$8.75 on 12/31/14

\$9.00 on 12/31/15

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<http://www.labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/laborstandards/workprot/MW%20Updates/minimum-wage-update.shtm>.